

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Thursday, May 20, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. QUINN).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 20, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JACK QUINN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Reverend Father James Nock, Senate Chaplain, State of Connecticut, Hartford, Connecticut, offered the following prayer:

Almighty Father, we ask Your blessing on this august body, as we come together this morning to do the work of our Nation.

Let us never forget the potential we share together, to accomplish anything we choose. For with our combined talents, abilities, and experiences, there is no limit to what we can accomplish, only the limit of our own imaginations.

And we ask this of You, who lives and reigns, forever and ever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WICKER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOME TO FATHER JAMES J. NOCK

(Mr. LARSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Speaker, I would first like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Chaplain Ford for providing an opportunity for a dear friend and a pastor of mine in East Hartford, a person who has brought home and shepherds the flock on a regular basis, Dr. James Nock from East Hartford.

Father Nock was born in Hartford, Connecticut, of Italian and Irish descent. He is a graduate of Saint Bonaventure University, and he also took his graduate studies at Sulpice in Paris, France; ordained in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris on June 26, 1964, and currently the pastor of Our Lady of Peace in East Hartford, Connecticut.

Father also has served as the Chaplain of the Connecticut State Senate, and he has always brought not only great wisdom in his remarks but a great sense of humor and a sense about the people he serves here on Earth. I want to thank Chaplain Ford so much for providing Father Nock, the parish and the community of East Hartford with this wonderful opportunity.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 10 one-minutes on each side.

CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION SHORTCHANGING MEDICARE

(Mr. WICKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, the message is beginning to get through that the Clinton-Gore administration is shortchanging Medicare. Ill-advised regulations are threatening the quality of health care for our Nation's retired citizens by cutting Medicare \$20 billion below the level set by Congress in the Balanced Budget Act.

In a letter this month to HHS Secretary Shalala, 20 Democratic Senators joined 21 Republican Senators in urging this administration to reverse its decision, warning that harm could come to elderly patients. This bipartisan letter warns that if regulations are not revised, we may see closings of facilities, layoffs of dedicated caregivers, reductions in access to skilled nursing services and erosion of quality of care.

I say to our President, your cuts in Medicare are unacceptable and they

are not in compliance with the Balanced Budget Act. It is time for this administration to provide the resources our senior citizens require.

BIPARTISAN EFFORT FOR CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, last year we forced a vote on reform to clean up the way congressional campaigns are conducted. In the words of the respected commentator, Mary McGrory: "To get the bill to the floor reformers had to pry it out of the clenched jaws of Speaker Newt Gingrich by gathering signatures on a discharge petition."

When that vote for reform finally and belatedly occurred, we found out why. Every single Republican leader voted against the bipartisan reform, supported by good government groups, and every Democratic leader voted for it. Nevertheless, Republican DELAY wrote the obituary for this proposal in the Senate.

This year we face the same problem. Here in this House, 196 Democrats have signed a petition to force debate on all proposals, Democratic and Republican, now. Speaker HASTERT and Mr. DELAY say wait until some time in the fall. Every Republican member who refuses to sign this petition for timely action is complicit in killing reform. Join us in a bipartisan effort. Sign now and act now.

HMO REFORM

(Mr. GANSKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the record. The other night I gave a special order on HMO reform and inadvertently mentioned the NFIB. In fact, the results I mentioned were from the National Survey of Small Business Executives on Health Care by the Kaiser-Harvard Program on Public Health and Social Policy. I was correct, however, in citing the numbers.

When this group of 300 small business executives was asked if HMO reform were passed into law and would increase premiums by up to \$5 a month, only 1 percent said they would drop coverage and 5 percent did not know; 94 percent would continue coverage.

This cost is in the range of what I think my legislation would affect premiums. This is borne out by the CEO of